

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephone interview of May 27, 2009. The contents of the interview are summarized by the remarks below.

Independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 25 are amended to further clarify the nature of the user context and the information included in a registered process. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, at pages 11 – 14 of the specification as filed and in the claims as filed. The claims are also amended to remove the phrase “according to selected criteria”. No new matter is introduced.

Independent claim 37 is canceled. New independent claim 44 is added. Support for new independent claim 44 can be found, for example, in the claims as originally filed and pages 11 – 14 of the specification as filed. Dependent claims 39, 40, 42, and 43 are amended for consistency with these changes. No new matter is introduced.

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 103

The following rejections are respectfully traversed: Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25-30, 32, 35, 39, 40 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyda (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0229722, hereinafter Beyda) in view of Hinckley (U.S. Patent No. 5,828,882, hereinafter Hinckley). Claims 5, 21, 31, 33 and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyda and Hinckley in view of Cahill (U.S. Patent No. 5,428,784, hereinafter Cahill).

The claimed invention as amended

Claims 1, 9, 17, and 25 as amended provide further definition for the user context. This additional definition is also incorporated into new claim 44. The user context must include a user context state, which is a variable that indicates a state for a particular portion of a user context. One example of the state variables described by the present invention are the Boolean variables described, for example, at pages 11 – 14 of the specification as filed. A Boolean variable is an example of a state variable that has two states (True and False). The user context further defines a communication event that occurs for at least one value of the user context state. As described in the specification, the communication event is an event in response to receiving a notification for display. Numerous examples of communication events are provided in the specification. Additionally, a rule that provides a condition for modifying a defined communication event is also required. Examples of such rules are provided, for example, at page 14 of the specification as filed.

The Beyda reference

Beyda describes a method for providing notifications, such as notifications about the availability of messages from an instant messaging service. Beyda describes the possibility of implementing rules to govern when a notification is provided to a user, as well as rules for when a message could be provided to the sender of an instant message regarding whether an instant message was delivered. Beyda further includes a description of having time dependent rules, where a user is given a certain amount of time to indicate that it is desirable to receive a message, the message being handled in a different manner if the user does not respond.

Combination of user context and rules

Beyda fails to describe or suggest several features of the claims as amended. First, Beyda does not describe or suggest having both rules and a user context that includes a

user context state. In the claimed invention, one or more user context states can be defined that determine whether a notification is delivered. For example, a “full screen” user context state can be defined as true or false, depending on the status of the window the user is currently operating in. As described in the specification, a user can define the user context so that when “full screen” is true, notifications are not delivered. Another example of a user state is “in a meeting.” At least one state of the user context will define an alternative action for handling a notification. Rules can then be layered on top of a context to modify the alternative action. For example, if the context “in a meeting” is true, notifications are not delivered. However, a rule can then specify that notifications are delivered, if the notification relates to a person attending the “meeting”.

Beyda does not describe or suggest this interaction between context and rules. Beyda describes only a single layer, which is described as rules in Beyda. Regardless of whether the “rules” in Beyda are compared to the user context or the rules of the claimed invention, it is clear that the “rules” in Beyda cannot serve both functions, as Beyda does not describe or suggest the concept of having a user context that defines a communication event depending on a the user context state, and then having a rule that specifies a condition for modifying the communication event. The combination of Beyda with Hinckley and/or Cahill does not cure the above defects.

Thus, independent claims 1, 9, 17, 25, and 44, and all corresponding dependent claims, are believed to be allowable for at least the above reason.

Receiving information regarding the change of user context state

With regard to at least claims 1 and 44, Beyda also fails to describe or suggest receiving an indication regarding the change of a user context state. In the claimed invention, a

registered process, such as a calendar program, contains information regarding at least one user context state. For example, if a user has a meeting scheduled in the calendar, the calendar can provide information about when the meeting begins and ends. Both events are potential times to change an “in a meeting” user context state. The calendar program can forward state change information to a notification program when a state change occurs, or the calendar program could wait until it is asked by a notification program. Either way, the calendar program (or other registered process) provides the information about the user context state change, and this information is received by another process as an indication of a change in the user context state.

Beyda does not appear to have an equivalent to user context states, where a process informs another process about the state change. Instead, Beyda appears to build this type of information directly into rules, such as by having a rule providing for one type of behavior during normal business hours, and another type of behavior after normal business hours. For these rules, the user context is not being determined, so there is no information to be passed between processes. Instead, the action to take based on the rule is determined completely by what a clock or timer indicates.

Part of the reason why Beyda fails to describe or suggest having a registered process provide information is due to the fact that Beyda fails to describe or suggest registration of a process. The Office Action notes Hinckley as describing the registration of processes. While Hinckley generally describes registration, the combination of Hinckley and Beyda still provides no description or suggestion of having a registered process provide information about the change of a user context state. More generally, the combination of Hinckley, Beyda, and/or Cayhill fail to overcome the deficiencies described above. Thus, claims 1, 9, and 44, and all corresponding dependent claims, are believed to be allowable for at least this additional reason.

CONCLUSION

Having demonstrated that all rejections of the claims have been overcome, this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request early and favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated, since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned. Alternatively, the Examiner is expressly authorized to contact the undersigned by e-mail at lecarter@shb.com.

No additional fees are believed to be necessary. However, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2112.

Respectfully submitted,

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